



Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility

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For Immediate Release

August 8, 2003

COURT CLEARS THE WAY FOR START OF CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION FACILITY IN ANNISTON, ALABAMA

ANNISTON ARMY DEPOT, Ala. – The United States District Court for the District of Columbia denied a request to halt the start up of the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) today. This decision clears the way for the Army to move rockets into the facility and to commence chemical agent destruction operations immediately.

The decision to start operations was made by Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee. “Public safety remains our principal interest,” said Brownlee. “The Army has demonstrated since 1990 that it can safely destroy these chemical munitions, having already destroyed over eight thousand tons of chemical agent and over 1.3 million munitions without harming human health or the environment.”

“Many people have worked together to bring this facility on-line – including more than 750 highly trained professionals who stand ready to begin this important mission for our community and our nation,” said Timothy K. Garrett, the Army’s manager at the ANCDF. “My colleagues and I live in Anniston and neighboring communities. I grew up nearby and look forward to my daughter growing up and staying in the area. All of us will operate this facility knowing the safety of our families and all Anniston area residents, as well as the protection of our environment, depend on everything we do.”

(More)

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The Army intends to conduct "limited burns" until certain schools and community facilities, located between seven and 12 miles from the facility, are overpressurized this fall. This means the Army will only process M-55 rockets containing nerve agent GB, which will be punched, drained of GB agent, and sheared in preparation for destruction of the munition and agent. The sheared rockets will be disposed of in the Deactivation Furnace System. Rockets that have been identified as potentially containing gelled agent will not be processed during this initial period. The GB agent drained from ungelled rockets will be collected and stored in the Agent Collection System. This agent will only be destroyed during pre-announced periods limited to weekends and the hours of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on weekdays. All activities will be conducted in accordance with the ANCDF permit issued by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

The Army will begin full operations only after the school and community facility overpressurization projects are completed this fall. In addition, the Army will continue to implement those actions previously agreed upon with State and local officials. These actions include protection of populations with special needs; the activation of sirens and the Emergency Alert System; provision of tone alert radios; and the use of updated toxicity thresholds for community emergency preparedness planning.

The Army, to date, has safely destroyed more than 8,000 tons of chemical agent, 26 percent of the United States' stored chemical agents. The chemical weapons on Johnston Atoll, an island in the Pacific, were the first to be destroyed. Currently, destruction operations are ongoing in Tooele, Utah, and Aberdeen, Md. Operations are scheduled to begin within the next few years in Pine Bluff, Ark.; Newport, Ind.; Umatilla, Ore.; Pueblo, Colo.; and Blue Grass, Ky.

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